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AIWRS

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FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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ALASKA YUKON

Arctic International Wildlife Range Society

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July 26, 1979

Dear Friend,

At the recent 44th Annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Toronto, individuals and organizations met under the theme "Consolidating Conservation Efforts". It was very apparent at that meeting that a united front must be formed to develop and support a comprehensive approach to conservation of northern Yukon lands and resources. It is in this light that the Society hopes to be re-vitalized, and that is the purpose of writing to you now.

Since the Berger Commission on the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline several important developments in the northern Yukon are noteworthy:

i) The Hon. Hugh Faulkner, former Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs (DINA), withdrew 15,000 sq.mi. of the northern Yukon from further development pressure; this is only a temporary measure;

ii) The Liberal Government signed an Agreement-in-Principle with the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement which sets aside a minimum of 5,000 sq.mi. of the Yukon's "North Slope" for a national wilderness park;

iii) Parks Canada has proposed a national park be established in a portion of the reserve area;

iv) In July of 1978, DINA established a Task Force to develop a management plan for the reserve area with particular focus on the range of the Porcupine Caribou herd;

v) Concurrently, the Dept. of Environment established a committee under Mr. Anthony Keith of the Canadian Wildlife Service to develop management concepts for the Porcupine Caribou in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These concepts have now been developed into various drafts of an international Migratory Caribou Convention, the most recent of which is dated May 1979.

At a special strategy meeting held in Whitehorse in March of this year, participants called upon the AIWRS to be re-vitalized as the coordinating environmental organization on conservation of northern Yukon lands and resources. Representatives of the Yukon Conservation Society, the Alaska

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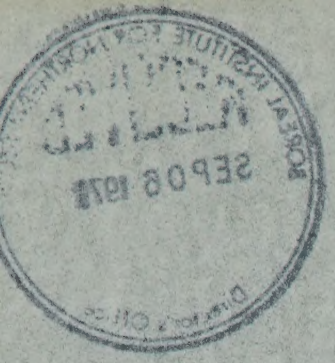

Arctic International Wildlife Range Society

July 26, 1979

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i) The Hon. Hugh Faulkner, Former Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs (DINA), withdrew 15,000 sq. mi. of the northern Yukon from further development pressure; this is only a temporary measure;

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Conservation Society, the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, the Canadian Nature Federation, the Sierra Club of Western Canada, and the AIWRS passed the following resolution: (which also has the support of the Canadian Wildlife Federation):

> That the AIWRS be re-organized to be the focus for conservation interests in Canada and the United States respecting the range of the Porcupine Caribou herd in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Alaska, and to carry forward the resolutions adopted at the meeting of conservation organizations in Whitehorse on March 17 & 18, 1979;
>
> and for this purpose that the board of directors of the Society be restructured so as to include members who are members of the supporting conservation organizations in the United States and Canada and of native organizations in these countries.
>
> A steering committee of Dave Norton, Bob Sharp, George Scotter and Andrew Thompson will be responsible to bring about this re-organization. A full time staff person will be hired as soon as possible to assist the steering committee. CARC will provide seed money for these purposes on the understanding that when the Society is re-organized and has sufficient funds, it will repay this advance.

I have been hired under the above resolution to initiate the said action. The Society has been dormant since 1977, therefore this newsletter is to inform you of the recent developments with the Society and to propose a new focus for active support towards a strong conservation lobbying effort. Enclosed you will also find a copy of the resolutions passed at the March meeting in Whitehorse.

The suggested focus for the next few years is the proposed Migratory Caribou Convention. As the draft convention now stands, it is not acceptable as a conservation document. There are too many generalities and too few specifics to ensure that the caribou will, in fact, survive the pressures for development. The Canadian government needs the strong support of conservation and native organizations to strengthen its hand in negotiations with the United States.

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In the next few months, you will receive a notice of an Annual Meeting to be held in Whitehorse in the late fall. At that time, the Society will elect a new slate of directors and update its objectives and resolutions. Membership renewal forms will be forwarded with the next newsletter. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to write and let us know your thoughts on the proposed objectives. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Russell LeBlond.

Nancy Russell LeBlond (Mrs.)
305-2233 Allison Road,
Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1T7

Resolutions on Northern Lands

WHEREAS Northeast Alaska, the Northern Yukon, and the northwestern part of the District of Mackenzie is the Northwest Territories comprise a natural heritage of regional, national and international importance for its unique landforms, plant and animal species, including migratory birds and marine life, and for its cultural and archeological significance;

AND WHEREAS the migratory Porcupine Caribou Herd is symbolic of this natural heritage;

AND WHEREAS conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, its habitat and the ecosystem of which it is a part is the primary objective for this region;

AND WHEREAS we believe the following principles must govern the activities of man within this region:

1. there must be an international regime for the region;
2. to achieve the primary objective, there must be unified management and planning based on thorough research and carried out by effective implementation and enforcement;
3. there must be recognition of native interests and rights;
4. regional interests must be reflected in the research, management, planning, implementation and enforcement;
5. there must be security for the region by entrenchment of these essential principles through legislation or by agreement;
6. there must be continuing involvement of the public in planning and management by such means as monitoring, reporting, educating, and by representation at hearings;
7. there must be timely implementation of these principles.

AND WHEREAS a Canada-United States convention for conservation of migratory caribou and their environment is under negotiation, and the proposed convention will establish an independent Commission to make recommendations governing harvest of caribou, conservation of caribou habitat, and the ecosystem of which caribou are a part, and any other measures it deems necessary to ensure the long-term conservation of the caribou;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has entered into an Agreement-in-Principle with Inuvialuit (COPE) that a National Wilderness Park of not less that 5,000 square miles in the Northern Yukon be established for the purpose of wildlife protection and wilderness conservation;

AND WHEREAS Old Crow People in conjunction with the Council for Yukon Indians are negotiating an Agreement-in-Principle that will have a direct, long-term effect on the lands and wildlife of the Northern Yukon;

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AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has withdrawn all lands north of the Porcupine and Bell Rivers (15,000 square miles) in the Yukon for a national wilderness park and other conservation purposes;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. We strongly endorse the speedy completion of the international convention between Canada and the United States for the conservation of migratory caribou and their environment.

2. Under the umbrella of this convention there be established a unified regime of land management, habitat management and species management to ensure the accomplishment of the principles stated above for the entire range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd in Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories.

3. This management regime must provide for certain restraints that are basic to the primary objective of conservation of the herd, its habitat and the ecosystem of which it is a part. These are:
   (a) that subsistence harvesting of any species be given priority within the sustaining capacity of the ecosystem.
   (b) that any other use of the region must not be prejudicial to the primary objective; and the onus of establishing that a particular use is not prejudicial must rest on the potential user.

4. Within the withdrawn portion of the region and the adjacent portion of the caribou range in the Northwest Territories we support a national park of a wilderness character, a national wildlife area, or a combination of these, following appropriate agreements with native peoples but only if the legislation establishing such a national wilderness park or national wildlife area fulfills the principles stated above.

Resolutions on the Dempster Highway

WHEREAS the Northern Yukon and the northwestern part of the District of Mackenzie of the Northwest Territories is an irreplaceable heritage of regional, national and international importance for its rich diversity of plants and animals, including migratory birds, for its cultural history and for its archeological significance;

AND WHEREAS the migratory Porcupine Caribou Herd is symbolic of the important natural resources of the region and its continued existence is essential to maintaining the cultural heritage of native peoples;

AND WHEREAS the preservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and its habitat is the major objective of current negotiations between Canada and the United States and is a goal of a Steering Committee established under the Agreement-in-Principle between the Government of Canada and the Inuvialuit (COPE) and of a Task Force established by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in Canada to advise him on planning land use and management in the Northern Yukon;

AND WHEREAS the just resolution of native land claims in the Northern Yukon requires the preservation of land and wildlife;

AND WHEREAS the Dempster Highway and the immediate and potential land uses associated with it represent a threat to the continuing viability of the Porcupine Caribou Herd;

AND WHEREAS there has been no comprehensive evaluation of the cultural, social, environmental and economic implications of the Dempster Highway and its associated immediate and potential land uses;

AND WHEREAS the international Porcupine Caribou Committee of biologists concludes that further research is required before an effective management system for the Dempster Highway can be designed and implemented;

AND WHEREAS the present knowledge concerning the potential economic benefits of the Dempster Highway does not establish that the anticipated cost of maintaining it on a year-round basis is justified;

AND WHEREAS the social costs and benefits of the highway would be unevenly distributed to the serious detriment of significant segments of the northern population;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. In order to preserve the Porcupine Caribou Herd, its habitat and the ecosystem of which it is a part, the Dempster Highway should be closed.

2. The Dempster Highway not be opened until:

   (a) comprehensive biological research, land use assessment and management planning have established, after public hearings, that the highway can be used without threatening the viability of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and,

   (b) there is a commitment by the Federal and Territorial governments to provide the manpower and financing required for effective management of the Dempster Highway and the region it makes accessible, so that the preservation of the herd, its habitat, and the ecosystem of which it is a part is ensured.

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